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THANK YOU FOR GETTING OUT THE WOMEN'S VOTE

Thanks to you, our ACTION ALERT subscribers, and our members, you made Get Out the Women's Vote Day a huge success. Not only did we help make more people aware of the growing political power of women voters, we also helped focus attention on the non-partisan drive to get women to the polls. AAUW's national campaign to get women to vote became a significant part of print and electronic media analysis of the 1982 elections. According to data compiled by our Communications Department, AAUW received coverage worth over \$125,000 in advertising dollars. Newspapers including the New York Times, Washington Post, Des Moines Register, Los Angeles Times and Herald Examiner all ran articles about the vote project. CBS Network News, ABC Radio, a variety of wire services and local radio and television affiliates covered our story. But the real story was you - AAUW members who made it possible. Thank you for working quickly, efficiently and effectively in response to our October ACTION ALERT.

THE 97TH CONGRESS LAME DUCK SESSION: A SUMMARY

Lawmakers had few good words for the lame duck session as they left Washington in the days just before Christmas. The House adjourned on December 21 after completing action on the FY83 continuing appropriations resolution and the gasoline tax, and on December 23 the Senate broke a filibuster led by Jesse Helms (R-NC) against the gas tax, passed that measure, and was able to go home as well.

President Reagan had forced Congress to hold the lame duck session to continue action on the 10 appropriations bills that remained when Congress recessed in October. Because few good things ever come from lame duck sessions, most MCs would have preferred to have passed a continuing resolution before the election recess that would have funded the government into 1983.

Continuing Resolution

Passage of the \$379 B continuing resolution and several regular appropriations bills occupied much of the lame ducks' 3½ week session. Neither Republicans, Democrats, Congress, nor the Administration was completely pleased with the final bill. Elimination of jobs money made some unhappy and limited MX funding vexed others. Major provisions of the funding bill which extends government spending through the end of fiscal 1983 (September 30, 1983), include:

- \$232 B for Defense - only 7% less than the President's large defense budget request. The defense appropriations, however, include several important changes in Reagan's program including:
 - MX missile - all of the \$988 M in requested production funds for the first 5 MXs were cut and the President was directed to come up with a better (than dense pack) basing plan by March 1, 1983. However, \$2.5 B was appropriated for research and development on the MX and its basing system. This sum means that deployment of the missile on its current target date--1986--is still possible if further budget and program cuts are not made.
AAUW Policy Note: AAUW opposes the land-based MX missiles.
- \$181 M for the Clinch River breeder reactor - a nuclear plant, fueled by plutonium, that would produce fuel while generating electricity. The law states that no construction of permanent structures may take place in FY83. Unlike the CRBR most nuclear power plants are fueled by uranium. The plutonium fuel is particularly dangerous because it can be fabricated into bombs through a fairly simple procedure.
AAUW Policy Note: AAUW opposes the Clinch River breeder reactor.
- \$241 M for Legal Services Corporation - In addition to approving funding for LSC, a limit was placed on compensation members of the LSC board of directors may receive for services to the corporation. The measure also prohibits reimbursement for membership in private clubs and severance pay exceeding that paid to comparable government employees.
AAUW Policy Note: AAUW supports adequate funding for the essential services provided by the

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Continuing Resolution, continued

LSC and opposes misuse of funds by corporation board members.

- o \$200 M for state low income energy assistance and weatherization.

AAUW Policy Note: AAUW supports energy assistance to provide essential energy to the poor and programs that promote conservation, such as weatherization.

- o The complete text of the \$89.1 B Labor/Health and Human Services/Education Appropriations -

Unlike many other appropriations which dictate that the continuing resolution fund programs at the lower of the House or Senate-proposed levels, in general, funding for the Labor/HHS/ED provisions was higher than the initial Reagan administration request. Education programs were principal beneficiaries of Congress' decision not to adhere to the President's figures: the President's request for the Department of Education (ED) was \$9.9 B, but the final appropriation was \$15 B.

AAUW Policy Note: AAUW supports full funding for public education and therefore opposes cutbacks in the ED budget. AAUW also opposes cuts in entitlement programs such as AFDC and other welfare programs where cuts would limit services to the poor. Most of the proposed cuts would also have had a disproportionate impact on women.

- o A provision allowing federal employees' health benefit plans to pay for abortions.

Other Action: Social Security Disability Insurance

In a separate last minute action Congress passed temporary legislation that will help individuals who have been thrown off the Social Security disability rolls. The new law permits individuals who are dropped from the rolls before October 1, 1983 to continue collecting payments while they appeal their termination. If the appeal fails they must repay the benefits. The new law also allows the HHS Secretary to slow down the current review of disability rolls--approximately 265,000 recipients have been dropped from the rolls in the last year as a result of the review, many without justification. The July 1, 1983 expiration date of this new law assures that Congress will reexamine the disability process in 1983.

AAUW Policy Note: AAUW opposes removing individuals from Social Security Disability Insurance rolls if they are permanently or severely disabled and unable to work.

NEA/NEH:

The regular Interior Department and Related Agencies Appropriations were also enacted separately from the continuing appropriations resolution. The final \$7.5 B bill was \$1 B above the President's request. Much of the increase will be directed toward resource protection programs, energy conservation, and research on alternative energy technologies and synfuels.

Among the "Related Agencies" included in the Interior bill are the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities. The final appropriations for the Endowments were much closer to figures supported by AAUW than to the administration's requests. The NEA will receive \$143 M and the NEH \$130 M for FY83. Contrasting this with the administration budget request of \$101 M for NEA and \$96 M for NEH demonstrates a significant victory for these important educational and cultural programs.

AAUW Policy Note: AAUW supports full funding of NEA and NEH.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE: WHAT'S AHEAD FOR THE 98TH CONGRESS

The 97th Congress which seemed at its start to threaten freedom of reproductive choice, ended on a note of victory for pro-choice advocates. The high expectations of anti-choice groups engendered by the 1980 elections were deflated by the close of the 98th Congress. When the Senate defeated Jesse Helms' human life statute in September 1982, it was clear that the balance of power on the abortion issue had shifted so that the pro-choice groups were standing ground.

What do pro-choice activists foresee in the 98th Congress? They do not expect that the Senate will spend time on a Helms-type human life statute, which defines human life as beginning at conception. Action is also not expected on a constitutional amendment to overturn Roe v. Wade. However, back in September 1982 Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-TN) promised Orrin Hatch (R-UT) that his human life federalism amendment, giving Congress and the states concurrent power to restrict and prohibit abortions, would be debated early in the 98th Congress. It remains to be seen whether Senator Hatch will push his human life federalism amendment (S.J. Res.110) or possibly a states rights amendment.

Pro-choice activists do expect attempts during the 98th Congress to pass measures that would prohibit federal funding for abortions. In addition to the Hyde-type riders attached to separate appropriations bills, ACTION ALERT readers should expect to see a Hatfield-type bill introduced--one that would permanently prohibit federal funding for abortions. Also, it is expected that MCs will continue to try to attach Ashbrook-type amendments to appropriations bills, prohibiting federal em-

Freedom of Choice, continued

ployee health insurance plans from covering abortions, except in cases of life endangerment.

ACTION ALERT readers should watch for the Supreme Court's decision in the Akron case. In the Akron case the Court will review several state statutes to decide if they constitute permissible "regulation" of abortions. This case should provide clues to pro/anti choice groups as to what types of abortion regulations are permissible under the Fourteenth Amendment rights of privacy.

STATE ERAs

The ERA campaign and publicity on the "gender gap" have made elected officials more conscious of the need to appeal to women on economic and equity issues. As a result, the push to introduce state ERAs has come from members of state and local organizations, as well as from elected officials.

The AAUW Board at its October meeting approved the Association Legislative Program Committee recommendation that the Association not encourage state ERAs. The Board agreed with the ALPC's assessment that the cost of the state referenda in terms of Association time, effort, and money would not be the most fruitful approach to equity at this time. Further, a nationwide pattern of defeats on state ERA referenda could damage existing pro-ERA networks and legislators' willingness to enact equity legislation and the federal ERA.

The National Organization For Women, National Women's Political Caucus, and League of Women Voters are also approaching state ERAs with extreme caution, although in Oregon the Women's Political Caucus is leading the pro state ERA drive. Nationally, NEA and BPW are supportive of state amendments. Both organizations approved convention resolutions in July stating that their affiliates should support attempts to enact state ERAs.

On the national level, ERA was reintroduced in the U.S. House on January 3rd, 1983 by Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-CO). It will be distinguished by the number H.J. Res.1.

ACTION: If a state ERA is being proposed in your state contact Nancy Lazerow-Zirkin (800/424-9717) at AAUW in Washington and your Division President or Legislative Chair.

THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS

When the 98th Congress convened for its opening session on January 3 the legislative formalities remained the same, but some things were different. Results of the 1982 elections in the House showed a 26 seat gain for Democrats, giving the party a 103 seat majority, with 268 to 165 as the final count.* Many of the Republicans defeated in the 1982 elections were those first termers who came in with the 1980 Reagan landslide. Those members of the House who received 100 percent on the AAUW voting record fared well. Sixty-seven House members who received 100% ratings from AAUW sought reelection, 66 of these will return to their seats. Ten did not run again. Five women, three Democrats and two Republicans, joined the Freshman class of the 98th Congress, bringing the total women in the House to 21. No major changes occurred in the Senate.

In both houses of Congress it is evident that the three issues that dominated election politics--defense spending, Social Security and the federal budget--will prevail as the focus of Congressional debate in the 98th.

Another political spinoff of the mid-term elections was the impact of the gender gap. Pollsters in 1980 identified different voting patterns of females compared to males. These differences were further demonstrated in 1982 when the "women's vote" was characterized by a highly Democratic vote where women appeared to be rejecting the administration's lack of compassion on such issues as ERA, jobs, child care, and women's economic needs. The White House has become acutely aware of the gender gap and its political implications for 1984. We can probably expect some of the warnings about women as a growing political force to be reflected in legislation put forward on Capitol Hill.

The effect of the mid-term elections will be felt in both houses of Congress in the months ahead. The President no longer holds a tight rein on new members of Congress. Voters, who turned out in much larger numbers than anticipated for an off year election, brought home the message that they want a change. The weak economy, a massive military build-up, and challenges to federal support for social programs led many Americans to vote their pocketbooks. It will be much harder for the President to command huge budget cuts on domestic programs as long as legislators believe their constituents no longer accept the radical economic changes that this administration has brought into play.

*There are two House vacancies due to the deaths of Rep. Jack Sweigert, (R-CO) and Benjamin Rosenthal, (D-NY).

ACTION ALERT DELAYS:

In the course of the next year AAUW will gain new capabilities for handling our membership and

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ACTION ALERT Delays, continued

accounting records through the installation of our own in-house computer. During this time there may be slight delays in processing ACTION ALERT subscriptions or renewals. If you or a member of your branch experiences such a delay, we apologize. You will not lose any issues of ACTION ALERT as a result of the delays and we hope that we can keep this inconvenience to a minimum.

CAN YOU USE THE NAME OF AAUW WHEN WRITING ABOUT FEDERAL LEGISLATION?

You may use the name of AAUW to reflect the positions of the Association as they are expressed in ACTION ALERT. You may, and should, reprint portions of AA in branch division bulletins, giving credit to AA. You may, and should, write letters-to-the-editor about AAUW issues on which we have taken a position.

You may not use the name of AAUW on any federal issue or bill on which the ALPC has not taken a position. Check with the Public Policy Department if you are unsure. If there is no AAUW position on a federal issue, and you would like to take action, you may provide background information to the ALPC so that it can be considered.

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